

United States Mint Launches ‘Space-Age’ Ohio Quarter

March 18, 2002

Buckeye State’s History of Aviation and Space Development Honored with New Coin

Dayton, Ohio — Governor Bob Taft today joined United States Mint Director Henrietta Holsman Fore and Treasurer of the United States Rosario Marin at the U.S. Air Force Museum at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base to unveil the Ohio commemorative quarter-dollar coin, the 17th under the 50 State Quarters Program.

Ohio joined the Union on March 1, 1803, becoming the 17th state. The Buckeye State quarter’s reverse design honors the state’s contribution to the history of aviation, depicting an early aircraft and an astronaut, superimposed as a group on the outline of the state. The design also includes the inscription “Birthplace of Aviation Pioneers.” The claim of this inscription is well justified — the history-making astronauts Neil Armstrong and John Glenn were both born in Ohio, as was Orville Wright, one of the inventors of the airplane. Ohio was also the site of the development and testing of the Wright brothers’ 1905 Flyer.

“From Man’s first airplane to Man’s first steps on the moon, Ohio is truly the birthplace of aviation pioneers,” said Director Fore. “It is fitting that the Ohio quarter honors the technological achievements that have changed the world forever.” She added that Ohioans should be proud of this coin and the place it now takes as the 17th state in the 50 State Quarters Program.

Governor Taft selected the final design after the Ohio Coin Commission received and reviewed more than 7,000 design suggestions from across the state. U.S. Treasury Secretary Paul O’Neill approved the final design.

“This is an exciting time for Ohio,” said Governor Taft. “The quarter design celebrates our state’s legacy of leadership and commemorates the pride we have in being the home of the pioneers of aviation. In fact, we added another chapter to our aviation history earlier this month, when astronauts Nancy Currie of Troy, Ohio, and Richard Linnehan, who both graduated from The Ohio State University, carried four of our state’s quarters into space on the space shuttle Columbia.”

Now that the quarters have returned to Earth, Currie and Linnehan will keep one each, and the other two will be donated to the U.S. Air Force Museum in Dayton, Ohio, where they will be displayed for the public.

“Ohio’s tradition of reaching for the stars serves as a great example for our children and, indeed, all Americans,” said U.S. Treasurer Marin. “With that in mind, I am especially proud to be here today to honor this new state quarter.”

Hundreds of Ohioans attended the launch ceremony held in the Modern Flight Hangar of the U.S. Air Force Museum at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base. The U.S. Air Force Band of Flight kicked off the event, which included remarks from Governor Taft, U.S. Treasurer Marin, Director Fore, Senator John Glenn, astronaut Neil Armstrong and Stephen Wright, a descendant of Orville and Wilbur Wright.

The release of the Ohio quarter marked the end of production of the Tennessee quarter, released in January 2002. The quarters are manufactured at the Philadelphia and Denver Mints, which produce all U.S. circulating coins and ship them to the Federal Reserve for distribution to the nation’s banks.

Launched in 1999, the United States Mint’s 50 State Quarters Program is a 10-year initiative that honors each of the nation’s states in the order that they joined the Union. Each quarter is produced for about 10 weeks and will never be produced again. Surveys show that over 139 million adults are collecting the quarters.

The 50 State Quarters products, besides the popular collectible proof sets featuring the five state quarters of each year, are available as gift items including collectible spoons, key fobs, bookmarks, golf divot tools and pendants. Watches and desk clocks featuring the Ohio state quarter will be available later this spring. These products, and more information about the 50 State Quarters Program, are available through the Mint’s Web site at www.usmint.gov or by calling 1-800-USA-MINT.

Created by Congress in 1792, the United States Mint is a manufacturing and international marketing enterprise with \$2.4 billion in annual revenue and about 2,400 employees. In FY 2001, the United States Mint produced approximately 24 billion coins, fulfilling its primary mission to produce an adequate supply of circulating coinage for the nation’s commerce. For more information, please visit www.usmint.gov.

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